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## FORMULATION OF ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD BASED ON DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

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### Abstract

This research begins with the proliferation of Arabic language curriculum implementation at the early childhood level, which does not yet pay attention to psycholinguistic principles. This research aims to provide a formula for institutional managers/teachers in developing Arabic that is more relevant to early childhood development. This research method uses a library study (research library) with data collection instruments in the form of documentation. The results of the research show that the formulation of UAD Arabic language development according to the Psycholinguistic approach must pay attention to the psychological aspects of children both in formulating learning objectives, scope of material, methods and evaluation.

**Keywords:** *Formulation, language development, psycholinguistics*

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## INTRODUCTION

Language development for early childhood is very important to prepare language maturity at the next age. There are two important reasons why language is a part that needs to be stimulated for growth, *first*, that by nature, the aspect of language is a potential intelligence that must be developed; *second*, that in the social context, language skills for children are self-identity in interacting and socializing (Ulfah, 2020).

In addition, Arabic learning for early childhood is very strategic for the development of Arabic -as a second language- in Indonesia. This is based on several reasons: *first*, the large number of Islamic educational institutions both formal and informal that use Arabic as one of the subjects that must be studied by their students. In order for learning to run well, professional teachers in the field of Arabic are needed who understand very well the aspects of learning for early childhood, starting from learning strategies and techniques, material selection and developing it, learning resources and evaluation. *Second*, the ideological reason, that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim, for Muslims to learn Arabic is to learn to be able to read and understand the Qur'an. Indirectly, the introduction of Arabic for AUD is an introduction to religious sources. *Third*, the early childhood brain is still very flexible so that it can be introduced to a foreign language (Arabic) through habituation (language acquisition). (Mufti., 2018)

The results of several studies, that children who experience delays in language growth have a negative impact on the ability to interact and socialize, for example children feel inferior, insecure (Dalifa, 2022) or difficult to express ideas and feelings towards their fellow friends (Jaya, 2021). From the results of this study it is clear that language skills have a correlation with the ability to interact and socialize with others.

Related to the development of foreign languages (second languages) for early childhood, among experts have differences of opinion (pro-cons). Foreign language development is allowed only to stimulate the growth and development of foreign language potential readiness, also in its development is not separated from the context / characteristics of the child's own development. In other words, foreign languages (including Arabic in them) may be presented for introductory purposes only. As for foreign language learning is considered unnecessary for early childhood, they reason that socially they do not need foreign language as a means of interaction and communication in real language, it is also feared that there are obstacles to mastery of the mother tongue, namely Indonesian. (reference). Seeing this difference, it is not surprising that managers of Early Childhood Education Institutions (PAUD) have developed foreign languages,

such as Arabic and English, and some have not developed foreign languages (both Arabic and English).

Responding to the phenomenon in society, researchers see that nowadays Arabic language learning at the PAUD level has been widely given, especially in kindergartens with Islamic characteristics or more familiarly known as Raudlatul Athfal (RA). Based on data obtained from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in Cierbon Regency and City there are ... RA. Of these, Arabic is one of the contents of the curriculum given at RA. One of the strong reasons some managers present Arabic curriculum content for AUD is to simply introduce, as well as foster a sense of pride and love for Islamic religious teachings that are identical to Arabic.

Discourse on the application of learning in PAUD, researchers see that there are concerns in learning Arabic at the early age level, which is related to the learning model given that has not paid attention to the psychological aspects of children. Arabic language learning is presented with an adult learning model both in terms of material content and learning. There are several indications that cause these concerns, for example the findings of researchers in the aspects of ECCE teacher competence that have not received a touch of Psycholinguistic learning (the number of RA teachers still has not reached a bachelor in the field of ECCE), the learning model (material content, methods and evaluation) still adopts adult learning models such as memorizing a stack of vocabulary that cannot be applied in a real context (pragmatic), based on modules, without being accompanied by a variety of games and props that are relevant to their age (Agus Nasution, 2019,).

Responding to this anxiety, researchers intend to analyze the phenomenon from a psycholinguistic perspective. Through this research, it is hoped that it can contribute to strengthening the insight of teachers (readers) in developing Arabic at the early childhood level based on Psycholinguistics.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with library *research* methods / literature studies. The research procedure begins with collecting library source data, reading and recording, and processing research materials. Because this research is a research library, the data collected is extracted from various sources / libraries in the form of books and articles that study psychology, linguistics and psycholinguistics. The data collection technique uses documentation studies. The data is identified, processed, and analyzed to understand its meaning, significance, and relevance, with the following stages: data collection, data classification, data discussion and conclusion drawing.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Understanding Psycholinguistics and Its Urgency for ECCE Teachers

Psycholinguistics is an applied discipline (*pragmatic linguistic*), a combination of the disciplines of Psychology and Linguistics. In the area of language, both disciplines have different perspectives of study, Psychology studies Language from aspects of behavior or language processes, (Ismail, 2013) while Linguistics studies Language from aspects of language rules itself both related to phonetics (*ashwadiyah*), morphology (*shorfiyah*), syntax (*nahwiyah*) and semantic (*dilaliyah*). (Gani, 2019). The integration of the two disciplines, so that humans (especially teachers) are better able to decipher the phenomena of language competence-performance, which occurs in the midst of community life. So that weaknesses in linguistic aspects (which only limit studies to problems of language rules), and psychology (which examines aspects of human reason when speaking), can be perfected. (Samsunuwiyati Mar'at, 2015).

In general, psycholinguistics is the study of language users from aspects of the process of understanding a language. (Wahyudi, 2017) Meanwhile, according to Paul Fraise, psycholinguistics is a study of psychological aspects that drive a person's language needs. (Umbar, 2018) In other words, linguistics is related to language competence, while psycholinguistics is related to the performance of language competence . (Darjowidjojo, 2005).

From some of the explanations above, researchers see that language learning in a psycholinguistic perspective is not just how to present good and correct language rules, but the most important thing is how the psychological process of language acquisition (*iktisab al-lughah*) in children during the language learning process.

In the psycholinguistic perspective, language development in children can basically be done through two approaches, namely formal learning approaches (*learning*) and acquisition (*acquisition*). The development of Arabic in the form of a formal learning approach (*learning*) is more directed at how the teacher's efforts in creating / preparing a learning curriculum starting from the formulation of learning outcomes, material content, methods to be applied and the evaluation process. In the process, language development is carried out at certain times and themes that are limited and unnatural. Students (ECCE children) must be conditioned (if necessary forced) to follow according to the demands of the curriculum. In contrast to the acquisition approach (*acquisition*) is more on creating an atmosphere and language environment (*bi'ah 'arobiyyah*) that is constructive for the growth and development of Arabic for children. In its implementation, teachers do not prepare a detailed curriculum (as above) but rather prepare a

playroom (centra Bahasa) or Arabic habituation program in a totalistic and holistic manner.

Psychologically, there are weaknesses in the development of Arabic through a learning approach, one of which is a kind of forcing children to follow the demands of the curriculum at certain times, which may not be in accordance with the child's mood so that children do not feel happy in learning. While in the acquisition approach (aquistic) children are conditioned to be happier in the context of play and real life language. Through this habituation and creation of a different life, the development of Arabic in children is acquired naturally and accidentally. So that Arabic is constructed from a more real and natural experience.

Seeing the importance of teacher understanding of the psychological aspects of language in children, in this case ECCE teachers when they want to develop Arabic (second language) are required to understand psycholinguistic studies. Through psycholinguistic understanding, teachers not only understand the rules of Arabic itself, but how the condition of children's psychological readiness in learning. Teachers will be more helped to create learning conditions (conditioning cllas) that are more relevant to the child's condition. In addition, teachers will also be better able to create a more pleasant learning atmosphere for children. So that learning Arabic (even though it is a foreign language / second language) is not seen as complicated and burdensome for children, but will grow and develop in children naturally, such as there is no element of forcing (transferring) knowledge in children.

ECCE teachers who understand psycholinguistics (especially developmental psycholinguistics), will be able to construct language in children in a more human way according to the child's own stage of development. In the perspective of Developmental Psycholinguistics, the development of Arabic at AUD actually emphasizes more on how children can acquire Arabic in a happier, natural and real life way in the Arab area. To achieve this, ECCE managers or teachers need to create a constructive language environment both from the atmosphere, teacher competence to habituation programs that stimulate this aspect of the language.

## **2. Scope of Psycholinguistics**

Based on several literacy sources, that Psycholinguistics is a very broad discipline of study. In this case, at least researchers can classify into the following sub-disciplines:

- a. Psikolinguistik teoretis.

Theoretical psycholinguistics is a subdiscipline of psycholinguistics oriented to discuss matters related to language theory, such as the nature of language, the characteristics of human language, language structure, competence and performance theory (Chomsky model), langue and parole theory (Saussure model), the principle of cooperation in conversation (Grice's model), the principle of language politeness (Leech's model and Brown and Levinson's model), pragmatic competence, communicative function, implication, and explicature (Umbar, 2022).

- b. **Developmental psycholinguistics** Developmental psycholinguistics is a subdiscipline of psycholinguistics that is oriented to discuss matters related to language acquisition and language learning. Monitor theory, Krashen's hypothesis, language acquisition devices, and critical periods of language acquisition are among the details of developmental linguistic studies (Ni'mah, 2022).
- c. **Social psycholinguistics** is a subdiscipline of psycholinguistics oriented to discuss matters related to the social aspects of language. Included in this study are language attitudes, language acculturation, culture shock, social distance, cultural critical period, language exposure, social class in language use, gender in language use, age in language use, language variety, kinesic, and familiarity in language use (Ni'mah, 2022). Because it is oriented to the social aspects of language, social psycholinguistics is often called psychosociolinguistics .
- d. **Educational psycholinguistics** Educational psycholinguistics is a subdiscipline of psycholinguistics that is oriented to discuss matters related to aspects of education in general. This includes the role of language in teaching and improving the language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of students (Werdiningsih, 2021).
- e. **Neuropsycholinguistics** is a subdiscipline of psycholinguistics oriented to discuss matters related to the relationship of language and the human brain. This includes hemispheric sorting related to language skills, language problems that arise when there is damage to certain parts of the brain, types of language disorders due to damage to parts of the brain, language lateralization, and brain plasticity (Werdiningsih, 2021).
- f. **Experimental psycholinguistics** is a subdiscipline of psycholinguistics that is oriented to discuss matters related to experiments in various fields involving language and language behavior. This includes experiments on giving certain treatments to children with special needs and language implication experiments to improve the language skills of second language learners (Sudarwati, 2021).

g. Applied psycholinguistics is a subdiscipline of psycholinguistics that is oriented to discuss matters related to the application of the findings of the six psycholinguistic subdisciplines up front in certain fields. For example, language implication experiments to improve the language skills of second language learners resulted in findings that with implications the language skills of learners increased by 60%. The findings can be applied to any second language learning activity whose characteristics are the same or similar to the experimented learning activity (Ni'mah, 2022).

### **3 Principles of Arabic Language Learning for AUD in the perspective of Psycholinguistic Development**

Principles of Arabic language learning for AUD

#### **a. Principles of education**

What is conveyed in learning Arabic, not only knows the language but must also contain religious and moral values. In its implementation, GuruPrinciples of Arabic language learning for AUD

ECCE is required to integrate these religious and moral values in the context of Arabic language learning. One of the concrete actions of teachers is how to choose teaching materials (ikhtiar al-maddah) Arabic that has religious and moral values (not just language). therefore, teachers can formulate the teaching material by referring to indicators of the development of religious and moral aspects at the AUD level. In the Early Childhood Development Attainment Level Standard (STPPA) it is very clear that the minimum limits that must be achieved in all aspects of development and growth ranging from aspects of religious and moral values, physical-motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, to aspects of art. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). In this case, ECCE teachers must be able to formulate teaching materials in which it can lead to the development of moral and religious aspects. So that through learning Arabic (both through learning and acquisition) the moral and religious aspects of children can grow and develop properly.

The principle of education, requires that ECCE teachers when teaching Arabic not only focus on training the development of aspects of the child's language, but also on changing the moral behavior of his religion.

#### **b. Psychological prinspi**

Learning Arabic in this case should take into account the psychological development of the child himself. Both from the material aspect, taste and needs. In early childhood development psychology (ages 4-6 years) aspects of language develop gradually, along with the growth of language function as well as the social level and needs of children. In this case, ECCE teachers must position all

aspects of learning (teaching materials, methods applied) must be in accordance with the stages of psychological development of children. The lack of knowledge of ECCE teachers on children's psychology, often shows mistakes in learning where children are treated like adults. Psycholinguistic development requires that ECCE teachers must start from their understanding of the characteristics of children's language development, to formulate materials, methods and methods of evaluation that are really in line with that level of development.

Nurhidayati explained the characteristics of children as follows: (Nurhidayati, 2016)

- 1) Happy to play. Learning strategies should be designed with a game model.
- 2) Happy to practice something. Learning strategies should provide opportunities to demonstrate language skills in front of the class.
- 3) Happy to ask. Students' questions should be answered with the child's level of understanding.
- 4) It's good to get rewards. Teachers should give various reinforcements, such as patting shoulders, stroking cheeks, thumbs up, or speech.
- 5) Want to do something if motivated. Language teachers for children should always try to motivate to increase student activity and interest.

c. Language Principles

In this context, Arabic learning at AUD should also consider the development of real language skills (not just theory or memorization of words that are not pragmatic-functional. Emphasis on basic Arabic speaking skills can be developed by preparing subject matter based on the presentation of vocabulary that is integrated into daily dialogue materials and about their environment, the subject matter given should be adapted to the characteristics of children who like concrete and holistic things, also adhering to the principles of language learning for children, including they learn things related to themselves They, family, home, school, toys and playmates, or materials go from the already known to the child to the unknown, from the easiest to the most difficult, from the simplest to the most complex, from the concrete to the abstract, and from the practical to the theoretical. (Muhbib Abd. Wahab, 2018)

#### **4. Application of Developmental Psycholinguistics in the Context of Arabic Language Learning in ECCE**

Learning discourse will not be separated from the 4 main components of learning, namely related to the formulation of objectives, scope of material, applied methods and evaluation. Applied psycholinguistics as a basis for the development of Arabic language learning provides a frame of reference for ECCE managers / teachers who will teach Arabic within the following limits:



a. Objective Aspect

In formulating the objectives of Arabic learning at the AUD level, at least it cannot be separated from the characteristics of early childhood learning itself, namely integrative holistic. The learning of Arabic should have something to do with the development of other aspects both religious and moral as well as with aspects of the Language itself. In addition, the characteristics of play are also a benchmark in formulating goals, namely so that children can find happiness through play. Therefore, the purpose of developing Arabic for early childhood at least contains the following aspects: 1) Stimulate language development (mother tongue and foreign), 2) space for expression and recreation (*al-lu'bah*), 3) can function language in a more real context (pragmatic) according to the level of need and age development.

b. Aspects of the scope of the material

So far, Arabic language learning at the PAUD level (especially in PAUD Khas Islam / *Raudlatul Athfal*) revolves around memorizing vocabulary, both related to the names of objects at school and at home, with ragama methods (chants and pats). In other places there is even Arabic language learning that goes into rote memorization of rules based on books and modules. Children are not introduced to how to use short expressions (*al-ta'birot*) related to the use of language in a real context (pragmatics). The disadvantage of material selection like this, in the end children memorize a number of vocabulary words but cannot use the vocabulary in a short conversation or real language context.

In the psycholinguistic perspective, Arabic teaching materials at the AUD level can be derived from aspects of language development and / or religious morals. The thing to note is as stated by Scott, Lee, and Borridge. put forward several learning principles that must be considered in language learning for children, including: (Nufus, 2017)

- 1) Language learning is based on the child's world, namely family, home, school, toys and playmates.
- 2) Language learning departs from something that is already known and close, easily accessible by students to something that is unknown or far from their reach, for example from the home environment, to the environment outside the home, continued to the peer environment, then to the school environment.
- 3) Language learning is associated with things that are of interest to children.
- 4) The points of learning presented depart from the knowledge that students already have using simple Arabic.
- 5) The tasks in language lessons are oriented towards activities or movement activities.

- 6) Learning Materials are a combination of something that is fiction and non-fiction.
- 7) Learning materials are oriented to the development of language skills.
- 8) National and foreign cultures were introduced gradually.
- 9) Learning Fundamentals and assignments should be appropriate to the age of the learner.

For teaching vocabulary at the AUD level, teachers must not only teach rote vocabulary in the form of mere nouns, but must also be taught in the form of more pragmatic verbs and short and real expressions. For example, when teachers teach vocabulary about learning equipment in school (*al-adawat al-madrosiyyah*), the teacher also introduces inspirational expressions related to the equipment. for example:

Noun forms: *al-Kitab* (book), *al-haqibah* (bag).

Connecting word: *aina* (where)..? *Fi...* (inside)....

*Pragmatic expression:*

أين الكتاب؟...في الحقيبة

#### d. Applied learning methods and media

Language learning is associated with things that are of interest to children. The points of learning presented depart from the knowledge that students already have using simple Arabic. The tasks in language lessons are oriented towards activities or movement activities.

Language learning for early childhood -in the perspective of Developmental Psycholinguistics- is a language acquisition activity that children get unconsciously through *exposure and* takes place naturally without being bothered with grammatically right and wrong problems but rather to the meaningfulness of a communication process. This model can be achieved when they interact directly with the mother and the people around her, and lasts continuously so that early childhood has the ability to communicate well. In the context of learning foreign languages (Arabic), learning must be created a natural atmosphere, a more real and concrete social setting and in *a genuine language environment* (*biah lughawiyah*).

Likewise, in the media aspect, Arabic learning at AUD is actually developed using very interesting media. In accordance with the level of psychological development of children who are in the play phase, at least the media and methods applied reflect the recreational aspect, namely children's happiness. Children are not forced to understand language with abstract and distant approaches, but must go through a more tangible approach.

## CONCLUSION

From the various discussions above, it can be concluded that psycholinguistics is very important for AUD teachers and managers who want to develop Arabic language competence for their children. Arabic language learning based on psycholinguistics is measurable in the components of learning (both objectives, scope of theory, methods, media and evaluation) that have been adjusted to the level of psychological development of early childhood.

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